

#### AFTERMATH OF THE WAR

evacuation, in contrast to internal interference, would be easy to ascertain.

Encouraged by the timidity of the Security Council in dealing with the situation in January, the Soviet government officially announce: that it had decided to withdraw its forces from Khorasan, Shahrud, and Semnan as of March 2 but to retain them in other parts of northern Iran until the situation had been "clarified." - This challenge did not remain unanswered. On March 4 Great Britain and on March 8 the United States addressed formal protests to the Soviet Union against the retention of its troops. In Moscow. Qavam lodged. a similar protest with the Soviet Foreign Minister and with Stalin personally. Refusing to accept the Soviet demands, he then left for Teheran.

Upon his return he had to face a new crisis. The Fourteenth Majlis was to end its term on March 11. No new elections could take place as long as foreign troops remained in the country. This provision had been voted the previous year by the Fourteenth Majlis itself in order to prevent the packing of a new parliament by the Soviets and the Tudeh, both of whom had made obvious preparations to that end. The lack of a parliament would make the Prime Minister a virtual dictator. Deprived of the Majlis' support he might be more amenable to foreign pressure. Hence a majority of the deputies wanted to prolong the term of the Fourteenth Majlis in order to avoid leaving the country without a parliament during the period when crucial decisions had to be made. But that was exactly what the Tudeh desired. Staging violent mass demonstrations in the parliament square, the Communists barred most of the deputies'

entrance to the parliament building on several successive days. As a result, the few deputies who were permitted to arrive never constituted a quorum. This situation lasted until March 11; after that date no legal means could convoke parliament. As a result Qavam became the sole ruler of the country with nothing but the nominal authority of the Shah above him.

In the meantime the military situation was steadily deteriorating. Instead of withdrawing its troops the Soviet government poured in new forces of an offensive character, mainly tanks, and deployed

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